

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

EXTENSION OF ASHBURTON BRANCH RAILWAY,

(REPORT OF COMMISSION APPOINTED 2ND JANUARY, 1884, TO INQUIRE INTO BEST ROUTE FOR.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir W. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS, G.C.M.G.,
C.B., Governor of New Zealand, &c., &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Acting under the instructions which I had the honour to receive by the Commission dated 2nd January, 1884, I went to Ashburton on the 19th January and put myself in communication with the Chairman of the Ashburton County Council and with the Mayor of Ashburton. I agreed with them that I should proceed to Mount Somers to examine the district and take evidence from the settlers. I went there on the same day, and on Monday, the 21st, I rode over the country towards the Upper Hinds and Rangitata, returning by the back of the Gawlor Downs to the South Ashburton Gorge. On Tuesday, the 22nd, I took evidence from the settlers of the Mount Somers District, and then drove over part of the country. On the 23rd I rode over all the district between the South and North Ashburton and up to the Alford Forest, and I returned to Ashburton on Thursday, the 24th, by way of the Forks of the Ashburton. On Friday and Saturday I took evidence from residents of Ashburton, and returned to Christchurch by the evening train.

From the evidence taken, and my observation of the district to be affected by the proposed extension of the South Ashburton Railway, I have the honour to submit the following report to your Excellency:—

The line of railway the extension of which forms the subject of this inquiry proceeds from the Township of Tinwald, on the south bank of the Ashburton River: leaving the main line it follows the bank of the river to the station called Anama, nineteen and a half miles from Tinwald, and it has recently been extended to the station of Cavendish, twenty-two and a half miles from Tinwald. The terminus is on the south bank of the river, one and a half miles from the Township of Mount Somers: between the terminus and the township there is a good road passing over the river by a substantial bridge. This township is placed at the southern border of the Mount Somers agricultural district, and for some years past there has been a difference of opinion among the settlers in the neighbourhood as to whether the line should be extended across the river and into the settled part of the Mount Somers District, or carried on up the south bank towards the Gorge of the Ashburton River.